

SERMON TITLE: "The Lord Will Be Your Confidence"

SERMON TEXT: Proverbs 3:19-26

PREACHER: Rev. Kim James

OCCASION: June 11, 2017 (VBS Sunday) at First UMC (VBS message for kids and congregation)

INTRODUCTION

Each day in Vacation Bible School, the children spent some time learning from the Bible. The elementary-aged children came to Bible Discovery, where we opened up Bibles to colored bookmarks that helped us find the name of the Book of the Bible, and then the chapter number and verse number.

This morning, I'm going to have all of us do the same thing. If you'll take the black Bible out of the pew rack in front of you, you'll find that there's a pink marker. Please open the Bible to the book of Proverbs. You can see that the word "Proverbs" is at the top of the page. Proverbs is one of the books of wisdom, or wise sayings, in the Bible. Once you've found the word "Proverbs" at the top of the page, then look for the big number **3**. Now that you've found Proverbs chapter 3, look at the tiny numbers and count down until you find verse number 26 on the next page.

Now that you're there, you can see the words, "For the Lord will be your confidence." I really like that verse because it summarizes our five VBS themes.

1—GOD MADE YOU

Let's start with "God made you." The Lord will be your confidence because our amazing God, who created the universe, created us. God, who made really big and important things like stars and planets and galaxies, made our hearts and lungs and brains. God, who created the oceans and the mountains, put blood in our arteries and muscles in our legs. God, who created plants and animals with so much variety made each one of us with unique fingerprints.

When we read a Bible verse and want to understand it better, it helps sometimes to look at the other verses around it. That's called the "context." In the context of Proverbs 3:26, we see verse 19, which says, "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding [God] established the heavens."

Not only did God create everything, including us. But God did all that by wisdom and understanding. That kind of blows your mind, doesn't it? It makes us want to sing the words of Psalm 139:14—"Thank you, God, for making me so wonderfully complex!"

I know from personal experience that there are times when we aren't happy with our bodies. Maybe we don't like how they're shaped, or how they look. Maybe we feel sick, and our bodies aren't working as well as we'd like. One problem I have is that my body isn't very coordinated. It's always been hard for me to jump or hit a baseball. Most of us would like it if we had more confidence in our bodies. But, whether our bodies are strong or weak, God is the one in whom we can really trust. The Lord who made heaven and earth—and us—is the one who will be your confidence.

2—GOD IS FOR YOU

The second reason why the Lord will be your confidence is because "God is for you." On Tuesday, we learned the story of how Rahab helped protect God's people, and how they promised to return her kindness and protect her family. Our key verse was from Romans 8:31—"If God is for us, who can be against us?"

We see this same idea in the context of Proverbs 3. Verses 21-26 indicate that, if we keep God's wisdom in mind and practice it in our lives, then we'll walk securely and our foot won't stumble. Verse 24 says, "If you sit down, you will not be afraid; [and] when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet." Hmm. "Sweet sleep." That sounds good, doesn't it?

When God is for us, we don't have to worry about a lot of bad things happening. Sure, there will be rough times when things go wrong. No doubt there will be some problems at school, with our friends, in our family, or at work. Life definitely has some challenges. But when we rely on God, and live according to God's wisdom, everything will turn out much, much better. Don't forget: God is for you. Let the Lord be your confidence.

3—GOD IS ALWAYS WITH YOU

On day three of VBS, we learned the theme “God is always with you.” The idea is pretty much the same as “God is for you.” But maybe some lessons need to be heard over and over again to really sink in. Gideon was like that. In Judges 6, when God called Gideon to help his people rise up against oppression, Gideon replied, “But how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” God’s answer was “But I will be with you,” and God promised to stay with Gideon and help him. As Gideon followed God’s direction, some people turned against him, and others left him. But, over and over again, God taught Gideon not to rely on his own strength, or the strength of his people, but, instead, to put his trust in God.

I know there are times when we feel weak and alone. We wonder why no one wants to eat lunch with us, or no one wants to play with us, or why we don’t get invited to a party. It’s tempting sometimes to misbehave because we hope more people will like us. We think if we act a different way, maybe we’ll get more attention. Maybe people will laugh and think we’re funny or cool.

But God didn’t give Gideon confidence because he misbehaved. Remember, kids? Gideon gained more strength when he worshiped the one true God and when he trusted that God would help him win the battle. Even though Gideon’s army had less soldiers and their only weapons were trumpets and torches, God gave them victory. It really isn’t about us. As Proverbs 3:26 says, “The Lord will be your confidence.”

4—GOD WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

On Thursday, we learned about Jesus. After Jesus had his last supper with his disciples, they went to the garden to pray. Then the soldiers took Jesus to the governor, Pilate. Then Pilate sent Jesus to the cross to die. Jesus hadn’t done anything wrong. It was the crowds who yelled, “Crucify him!” who were wrong. It was Pilate the governor who was wrong. Even the disciples were wrong when they denied knowing Jesus and ran away in fear. Jesus went to the cross because of the wrong things that

other people did. And, today, we still do wrong things. Do you see the cross over there, covered with pink hearts? During VBS, we wrote on the pink hearts some things that we have done wrong. We stuck our sins on the cross, so we would remember that, when we confess and repent of our sins, Jesus forgives us. The big white heart at the foot of the cross has our fingerprints on it. It reminds us that God's love is very big.

When we do things that are wrong, it's easy for us to lose confidence in ourselves. Fortunately, it isn't our perfection that gives us assurance. The big white heart is a reminder that, no matter what you have done wrong, God will always love you. Today and always, the Lord will be your confidence.

5—GOD MADE YOU FOR A REASON

The theme of Vacation Bible School on Friday was that "God made you for a reason." We learned how Abigail was uniquely qualified to diffuse a conflict between her husband and David. She was able to bring peace to a difficult situation. Peacemaking is a wonderful gift. Maybe some of us are good at that too. Or maybe we have some other great quality or talent that God can use. God made us unique, so that each one of us can contribute a little differently from our special skills and perspective.

Sometimes in life our differences cause us embarrassment. Sometimes we get bullied because we're different. But, no matter who we are, there are great and important things that each one of us can do. God wants us. God needs us. God has plans for us. Don't ever forget: God made you for a reason, and that's why the Lord will be your confidence.

CONCLUSION

My family didn't take me to church very often when I was a kid, so I didn't know much about God. But when I was in the 6th grade, my friend invited me to go to Sunday School with her. That's when I started going to church every Sunday. The next summer, I also went to Vacation Bible School. Over time, I learned about God. I learned that God made me and loved me and was always with me.

That made a huge difference in my life. I was a good student, so I had confidence that way. But, socially, I was pretty shy, and I already told you that I have always been uncoordinated, so I was never any good at sports. But, when I found out that God was for me, I gained so much assurance. It wasn't confidence in my own self all by myself. It was confidence that God had made me for a reason, and that God would always give me whatever strength and skills I needed to accomplish his purpose.

Kids, I hope you have heard this message this week. I hope you know that Jesus forgives you, and God will always love you. No matter what happens, you have no reason to doubt yourself, for the Lord will be your confidence.